

Concordia University
Concordia Council on First Nations Education
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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**Concordia University
First Nations Education Project**

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1.0 GOAL:

To develop Concordia University as a centre for First Nations education through academic and educational support programmes appropriate to, and developed in concert with, First Nations communities. To create options for First Nations youth and provide them with an opportunity to build the confidence and skills necessary to their success.

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

To support and expand the work initiated by the Native Research Project through the identification of a plan of action for implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.

To improve relations between Concordia University and First Nations communities in Québec and thus ensure on-going collaboration on academic initiatives.

To ensure academic and social support programmes appropriate to Native students in order to guarantee them a successful academic experience.

To develop on- and off-campus educational initiatives which respond to the needs of First Nations communities.

To promote increased understanding and awareness of First Nations issues within the Concordia community.

To identify the importance to Concordia University of First Nations Studies programmes.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION:

A senior committee should be established to pursue research and consultation leading to formal recommendations to the Office of the Rector, Senate and the Board of Governors which will institutionalize Concordia's efforts in the area of First Nations education. This committee will go by the name the **Concordia Council on First Nations Education (CCFNE)**.

3.1 Council Membership:

In order to underline the priority placed upon this issue by the senior administration of the University and the imperative that all efforts be made in consultation with First Nations communities, it is recommended that the CCFNE be made up of the following members.

Each Faculty would be represented by the Dean or their appointed representative:

Faculty of Arts and Science

Faculty of Commerce and
Administration

Faculty of Engineering and
Computer Science

Faculty of Fine Arts
School of Graduate Studies

Associate Vice-Rector, Academic
Curriculum & Planning

Associate Vice-Rector, Services
Student Life

Assembly of First Nations - Concordia
(AFN-C - one male / one female)

Office of the Rector

First Nations Education
Representative

First Nations Elders
(one male / one female)

3.2 Mandate of CCFNE:

The mandate of the above Council would be to identify strategies leading to the successful achievement of objectives in the area of First Nations education as identified jointly by Concordia University and First Nations communities, and guide the University in their implementation.

In the short term, the Council would oversee the development of a number of measures including specific recruitment initiatives to encourage the admission of more First Nations students to Concordia and support programmes appropriate to the needs of these students.

In the long term, the Council will develop, on the basis of the Native Research Project and through on-going research and consultation, a formal proposal to the Office of the Rector on specific action to be implemented in the academic, employment and services sectors within the University to ensure the goal of access to appropriate education for First Nations communities. The committee will then be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the action plan.

4.0 SHORT-TERM ACTION:

It is imperative that, while further research is taking place, Concordia University make a serious statement, through interim action, on its commitment to pursue First Nations educational initiatives and to support Native students. Such action must address the issues of recruitment, support and space while continuing to promote on-going liaison with First Nations communities and to educate the University community to the situation of First Nations within Canada.

Action proposed for the short-term includes:

4.1 Recruitment:

Develop and implement strategies with the Liaison Department to support the process of recruiting Native students to Concordia. Initial strategies could include the distribution of information on Concordia University to all First Nations communities, the publication of a special recruitment brochure targeted to Native students, the training and support of Native students as ambassadors to Native communities, the identification of First Nations Education counsellors and the development of a higher profile for Concordia within First Nations communities. All recruitment activities addressed to Native students must be coordinated and include Native members of the Concordia community.

4.2 Liaison:

Disseminate the report of the Native Research Project and the implementation plan both internally and externally in order to provide a perspective on the University's vision and commitment in this area and to facilitate on-going consultation and networking.

4.3 Curriculum:

Pull together a list for publication of courses existing at Concordia University on First Nations issues in order to guide students wishing to study courses related to First Nations issues. The brochure could be made available to all students (Native and non-Native) before registration.

4.4 Community Education:

Organize a lecture series on First Nations education profiling external consultants invited to meet with the Council on various issues. The series would be sponsored by the Council.

Promote with appropriate departments (Learning Development Office, for example) the implementation of sessions on cross-cultural awareness.

4.5 Support Services:

Advocacy and Support Services of Student Services has, over the past year, begun to identify appropriate support services for First Nations students. It is proposed that, for the 1992-93 academic year while a more in-depth review is under way, Advocacy and Support Services continue implementing, under the guidance of the Council, short-term measures. Such measures will be reviewed by the Council and integrated, where appropriate, into the more long-term, permanent strategy.

Activities, as suggested by Advocacy and Support Services, could include:

- . on-going liaison with Student Services Directors re. coordination of special services to Native students
- . increased visibility of Native students on campus through support to AFN-C activities
- . facilitation of the establishment of an internal network for Native students

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improvement of the process of identifying Native students through the establishment of a data-base coordinated with Student Information Systems (SIS)

development of specific programme activities for Native students which may include but need not be limited to:

- welcome and orientation programme
- newsletter mailed to each student listing academic and social activities with an emphasis on "getting through the bureaucracy"
- adaptation by Counselling and Development of current programmes of study skills, time management, etc. for groups of Native students; development of special module for writing workshop/skill building by tutorial services
- investigation of the possibilities of providing peer support such as advising and referral offered by a Native mature student on a part-time basis
- presentation of workshops on a number of issues as identified by Native students
- development of a mentor programme
- increased liaison with agencies in First Nations communities
- development with Financial Aid of sessions on budgeting; liaison with First Nations bands and government agencies; development of special scholarship and bursary programmes; improvement of access to emergency loans
- incorporation of a Native student into the Student Advocacy Team
- development of information/workshops on legal rights and responsibilities

The Centre for Mature Students will be encouraged and supported in its efforts to provide on-going academic support to Native students.

4.6 Space:

A major priority in ensuring support to First Nations students is the provision of a "home", a location where students can meet, share and feel welcome amongst their peers. In light of the present space situation at Concordia, this need may cause certain logistical problems. A short term solution will be available for the 1992-93 academic year. With the move of the Office of Financial Aid into the new Library complex in the late summer of 1992, the basement floor of the M annex should be liberated by August 1992. This space will be occupied by **Concordia Council on First Nations Education** and, includes a larger office which could be used as a meeting space/documentation centre and is, in fact, large enough to hold a healing circle. As well, there is a waiting area and a small office which could be used by elders, counsellors, etc. The space would allow CCFNE to invite counsellors from the Native Friendship Centre for instance, to meet regularly with students. The long-term recommendation regarding space allocation to First Nations students should be addressed in the final plan of action to be proposed by the committee.

5.0 LONG-TERM ACTION:

CCFNE will address and make recommendations leading to action on the following issues:

5.1 Access:

Based on a review of existing, short-term recruitment initiatives, CCFNE will recommend and oversee the development of permanent specific recruitment targets as well as strategies which will familiarize Native parents and young people with Concordia University and its policy of openness to First Nations communities.

As mentioned under Short-Term Action, recruitment strategies may include a programme of ambassadors, Native students trained and supported to bring information to youth in First Nations communities both close to Montréal and in outlying districts.

5.2 Admissions:

A review shall be undertaken of admissions structures and accreditation procedures in order to identify systemic barriers which may exist, and to make recommendations which will improve admissions opportunities.

5.3 Training:

CCFNE will work on the implementation of an access programme which will, in a pre-session during the summer, offer to Native high school students some skills basic to their academic success (math, writing and study skills, computers, conflict resolution, assertiveness). As well, such a programme would offer an opportunity to these students to "experience" university life in a more controlled environment with Concordia First Nations students as mentors. The programme would also help students identify career choices appropriate to the needs of First Nations communities. The possibility of co-sponsoring such an activity with a CEGEP could be pursued.

5.4 Employment Issues:

One problem facing many educational institutions appears to be the lack of First Nations academics and administrators available to teach and lead academic initiatives in the area of First Nations education. As well, the limited number of faculty and administrative positions opening up each year makes it extremely difficult to undertake new initiatives of this kind. The Council will take a special look at this problem and will attempt to identify individuals and solutions to this dilemma.

5.5 On-going Support Structures (academic & services):

An in-depth look will be taken at existing and potential support systems in order to measure their efficiency and to make concrete recommendations for permanent implementation of appropriate services. Support addressed could include: physical location, academic and social counselling, cultural support (elders, etc.) and so forth. Special attention must be paid to the problems related to financial assistance.

5.6 Academic Initiatives:

The Council will address all issues pertaining to the provision of appropriate academic programmes. Included within the discussion will be the question of what can be done to meet the immediate training needs of the communities in question, not just on reserves but within community organizations, through off-campus and distance education. This investigation will be based on preliminary research into the educational needs of First Nations communities not being met presently by other institutions in the province or the country, on Concordia's strengths and on the resources available both internally and externally. Addressed as well may be the adaptation of existing courses or the development of new on- or off-campus courses, interdisciplinary programmes, continuing education programmes. The issue of First Nations Studies programmes, although not seen as a priority, will be investigated as well.

6.0 PROCESS:

The Council will review research done to date and additional research undertaken by research assistants at the request of committee members. They will meet with internal and external consultants and may undertake surveys of the University community as required to identify interests and concerns. Internal consultation could include members of the academic community identified as having an interest in First Nations educational issues including such individuals as Mary Brian (Director, Centre for Mature Students), Rich Diubaldo (Director, Continuing Education), Ann Kerby (Director, Advocacy and Support Services).

6.1 External Consultants

There are a great number of experts in all aspects of First Nations Educations. Consultants would be invited not only to address the Council, but also to participate in a lecture series on First Nations education which could take place in the Cinema or Atrium of the new library complex.

7.0 BUDGET:

The Office of the Rector has made a commitment through the Seagram's Fund for Academic Innovation and internal sources to financial support to the Council to December 1992, and to pursue on-going funding of educational initiatives for First Nations students.

8.0 TIME FRAME:

May 1992	Meetings to take place to finalize make-up of CCFNE, to clarify mandate and action plan, to identify research needs and to hire student researcher.
May - Aug 1992	Student researcher hired to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- undertake an analysis of research needs including census of current Native students at CU- develop a brochure listing CU courses on First Nations issues- identify and organize existing resources- organize framework for research plan- develop job descriptions and identify student researchers for 1992-93 academic year- develop more detailed time lines

- extend original consultation undertaken by Native Research Project through identification of additional resource people and development of more in-depth consultation process
- develop with committee members a preliminary budget proposal to be submitted to Vice-Rector, IR&F
- prepare groundwork for lecture series in September
- identify process of "tracking" Native alumni

May - Dec. 1992

CCFNE guides development of short-term action including recruitment strategies

June 1992

CCFNE sponsors activities by Art Solomon, honorary degree recipient

Sept. - Nov. 1992

Student researchers hired to undertake required research (including information on potential funding sources) and to organize lecture series

Sept. - Nov. 1992
continued

CCFNE collaborates in implementation of Native student orientation and reception

CCFNE meets with internal & external consultants, reviews research

CCFNE sponsors lecture series on Native education by external consultants and special programs

Visits to Native communities or organizations may be necessary during this period

October 1992

An interim report with an overview of budget requirements should be submitted to the Office of the Rector

December 1992

Submission of recommendations to Office of the Rector and final budget request

January - Sept. 1993

Implementation of recommendations for September 1993 academic and support programmes to begin in September 1993.